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SCOTT SNYDER

RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

AMERICAN VAMPIRE

VERTIGO

The
BLACKLIST
Part Three



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*IT WAS COMING TO
THE CROSSROADS*

*OF AN ANGEL
AND A SIREN...*

*HE WENT SPED A
FIGURE STANDING.*

*IN THE EARLY
MORNING NEAT.*

HOW COME
ALL THESE
OLD SONGS
ALWAYS HAVE
CROSSROADS
IN THEM?

IT'S CALLED
TRADITION. NOW
LISTEN.



*HER NAME WAS PEARL,
BUT A FLOWER SHE WAS*

*A FLOWER OF
BLACKEST SUN.*

YOU SAID
THIS WAS AN
OLD ONE!

I MUST HAVE
MIS-REMEMBERED.
SHOW THIS IS THE
BEST PART.

*SE WAS STANDING
VERY STILL.*

*WINNER
FACE PAISED
TO YES!*

AN APPROPRIATE
MOMENT

SO LOVER
TO LOVE

THE ONLY ASK TO
RE MY WIFE

SO PEARL
JONES...

HENRY

...WILL YOU
LET ME MAKE
AN HONEST
VAMPIRE OUT
OF YOU?

"THERE WAS ALWAYS
MUSIC. THAT WAS
THE THING..."

...BEING
AROUND YOU
TWO.

FOR PEARL
- June 1929

BEING
AROUND HIM,
YOU MEAN.

SHE'S.
YOU COULDN'T
STOP HIM, COULD
YOU?

NO, YOU
COULDN'T.

AND WHEN IT
WASN'T ON THE
GUITAR, IT
WAS--

SO
BAD!



SO BAD, I KNOW. I ALWAYS LOVED THAT ABOUT HIM. ON THE GUITAR, HE WAS SO GOOD. EVERY NOTE, ALL OF THEM. BUT THEN, HIS HUMMING, HIS WHISTLING--

HIS WHISTLING, MY LORD, THAT DROVE ME CRAZY ON THE WAY TO TAIWAN. I NEARLY PUSHED HIM OFF THE SHIP AT LEAST ONCE.

I DIDN'T EVEN BELIEVE HE WAS A MUSICIAN UNTIL WE GOT BACK FROM THAT TRIP. I THOUGHT IT WAS LIKE A COVER THE VMS HAD MADE UP FOR HIM. HE WAS GOD AWFUL.



CAL, I JUST WANT TO SAY THANKS.

DON'T BE SILLY, PEARL. HE WATCHED OVER ME IN--

NO, NOT JUST FOR THIS, FOR EVERYTHING. FOR BEING A GOOD FRIEND TO HIM. AND TO ME.



HE'D WANT YOU TO KNOW, IN CASE THINGS...DON'T IMPROVE.

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT, PEARL. HE'S A FIGHTER, YOU KNOW IT.

I SHOULD GO. PLAY SOME MUSIC FOR HIM, WILL YOU?

PEARL--
WAIT.

LET ME GO WITH SWEET TODAY, YOU STAY WITH HIM.





THE LAST WEEK
AND A HALF, THOUGH,
YOU'VE BARELY GOTTEN ANY
TIME WITH HIM. I KNOW YOU'RE
ON A MISSION, AND I KNOW
YOU WANT TO BRING DOWN
THE ONES WHO DID
THIS, BUT...

BUT
WHAT?

BUT
JUST...BE
CAREFUL.

THE
VMS WERE
HIDING US FOR
YEARS. BUT
SOMEONE FOUND
US. FOR ALL I KNOW
IT COULD HAVE BEEN
THEM WHO LEAKED
OUR LOCATION--
YOU'RE THE ONLY
ONE I TRUST,
CALVIN.

WE'RE GETTING
CLOSE TO HIM, CAL.
I CAN FEEL IT. THE ONE
BEHIND THIS COVEN, BUT
YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY
ABOUT ME. I'M AN OLD
HAND AT KILLING
VAMPS NOW.

TO BE
FRANK,
PEARL...

"...THOSE AREN'T
THE VAMPS I'M
WORRIED ABOUT."

DANNY
D'ONNAGAN

SNAPPY
NAME,
SOUNDS
LIKE A
SHOE-
SHINE
BOY.

I'M AMAZED
THIS GUY'S STILL
WORKING. HE WAS
HEAD OF CASTING
ON THE MOVIE I WAS
ON THAT TIME.
ATLANTIS.

AH, SO HE
GAVE YOU
YOUR "BIG
BREAK"?

IF YOU
CALL BEING
AN EXTRA A
BREAK.

HE SCREEN-
TESTED ME
THOUGH. I'LL
BET HE STILL
HAS MY REEL
IN THERE.

AW, HOW
CUTE. I GOT
TO SEE
THAT.

OVER
MY DEAD--

WHAT
THE--

OUT!
NOW!









DO YOU
SMELL
THEM?

A LOT.
SOMEWHERE
LOW... BUT I
CAN'T GET A
READ.



I REMEMBER
ON THE SET OF
ATLANTIS THERE WAS A
RUMOR ABOUT DONNEGAN
BEING A RUM RUNNER.
THEY SAID THAT'S HOW HE
CAME UP, WHAT HE HAD
OVER EVERYONE.



THEY SAID
HE HAD A WHOLE
OPERATION,
BACK THEN.

NOT JUST FOR
HOLLYWOOD EITHER,
BUT THE COUNTY. THEY
SAID HE BROUGHT IT
UP FROM SHIPS...



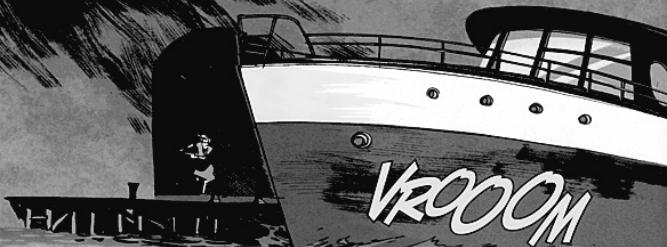
BINGO.



bip

VRRRR





THE AMERICANS,
THEY ARE
FOLLOWING?

NO, WE
MUST GO
SOUTH AND
FIND OUR
LOT.



ACTUALLY
FELLAS,
YOUR LOT
JUST FOUND
YOU!



HOW DO YOU
LIKE OUR NAILS,
MR. RESTON? WE
COATED THE TIPS
IN GOLD, JUST
FOR YOU!

BLAM
BLAM



UHH!

I'M
FLATTERED.



BLAM

UH!



THAT'S IT...
THAT'S IT, TAKE
YOUR
VITAMINS...

...PEARL...

WHAT THE
HELL ARE YOU
DOING?



YOU'RE ALL
TORN UP,
GIRL. BLOOD
FROM YOUR
OWN KIND, IT
SPEEDS UP
THE HEALING.
ONE OF MANY
FUN FACTS
ABOUT
YOURSELF
YOU LEARN
BY BEING A
COMPANY
MAN, AT
THE VMS.

I TOOK
CARE OF YOUR
BOATERS FOR
YOU.

YOU ALL
RIGHT?



I'M FINE. WE SHOULD SEE
IF BIXBY WILL GIVE US THE
NEXT FILE. THERE CAN'T BE
MORE THAN FIVE TARGETS
LEFT. WE COULD PROBABLY
TAKE ANOTHER DOWN
BEFORE SUNSET.



SURE WE
COULD, BUT
YOU THINK MAYBE
YOU SHOULD
SLOW DOWN A BIT,
DOLLY? YOU'RE
NOT EVEN PATCHED
UP FROM THIS
ONE, YET.



I'M FINE.
I WANT TO
FINISH THIS,
SKINNER.

I WANT TO
MAKE SURE THEY
CAN'T COME AFTER
US AGAIN. ME AND
HENRY. SO WE CAN
GET BACK TO
OUR LIVES.

WELL
YOU SURE AS
HELL AREN'T
ACTING
LIKE IT.

LIKE
WHAT?

LIKE YOU WANT
TO KEEP ON.
LIKE YOU GOT
ANYTHING LEFT
TO LOSE.

I KNOW ABOUT THAT. I MEAN,
ABOUT LIVING LIKE YOU HAVE
NOTHING TO LOSE. THE THING IS,
YOU ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING
TO LOSE, EVEN IF YOU DON'T
KNOW IT YET.

I'M JUST...I'M JUST SO
SCARED, SKINNER. I FEEL
SO LOST. I ALWAYS KNEW
THIS MOMENT WAS COMING.
THE MOMENT HENRY
WOULDN'T BE THERE
ANYMORE.

I'D JUST
GOTTEN SO GOOD AT
BLOCKING IT OUT. ALL THESE
YEARS, PRETENDING LIKE IT
WASN'T COMING. PRETENDING
LIKE IT COULD LAST.

WE ALL GOT IT
COMING, DOLLY. AND
EVERYTHING ENDS. EXCEPT
US. SOME DAYS THAT'S
THE BEST THING IN THE
WORLD. OTHERS...

IT'S A
NIGHTMARE.





I WAS COMING TO
THE CROSSROADS.

OF AN ALLEY AND
THE STREET...



"WHEN I SPIED A
FIGURE STANDING,

"IN THE EARLY
MORNING HEAT,



"HER NAME WAS PEARL,
BUT A FLOWER SHE WAS.

"A FLOWER OF
BLACKEST SUN,

SHE WAS STANDING VERY STILL
WITH HER FACE
RAISED TO THE SKY...



AND
EVERY
THAT VERY
MOMENT,
I DROVE
KERVIN
HOME.

CR...?

EARL

THE ONLY PLACE TO
BE MY WIFE

SHE SAID I'M
FROM HELL

AND FOR ALL MY
DAYS TO COME

WHERE'S
PEARLY

"THE DEMON IN
THE SHADOWS.

"WHISPERING TO ME,
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?"

BLACKLIST

part three of six

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AMERICAN VAMPIRE created by SCOTT SNYDER & RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

To be
Continued...

ON THE

LEDGE



MAT JOHNSON is the author of the graphic novels *INCOGNEGRO* and *DARK RAIN*, and the novel *Pym*. He teaches at the University of Houston Creative Writing Program and the Voices of Our Nation (VONA) program.

BY **Mat Johnson**

When I was ten, I was walking through Center City Philadelphia with my mother, trying to make our way to the trains at Suburban Station and head home to Germantown. It was something we did every day, but this day was different: police officers lining the streets, barriers put up at intersections, large cranes looming above, massive trailers parked on the sidewalk.

"They're filming a movie," my mother told me. It was such an odd thought, that the world that I watched on my black-and-white TV every night actually be based on my physical landscape. We sat in the crowd on the corner and waited for a scene to take place. A lady next to us said that a car would come speeding down the street and turn the corner. And that's what happened.

My mom took me to see the movie, *Blowout*. It was a political thriller starring a young TV star, John Travolta. I didn't understand most of it—I was 10—but I saw that scene that I had witnessed firsthand. It took 5 seconds. A car showed up, it turned a corner, and the movie moved on. Such a simple, pointless moment, but for me the act of taking down the thin membrane between fiction and reality was momentous.

The 1970s was the landscape of my childhood, but it was also the landscape of the Vietnam War, Watergate, rising gas prices, hostages in Iran, and the foundations of the cultural wars that are still raging in America today. Storytelling genres reflect the needs of their times, and the political anxiety of that moment translated into a slew of political films: *Day of the Jackal*, *Three Days of the Condor*, *All the President's Men*. They spoke to their era. And with that tradition in mind, I created *RIGHT STATE* to speak to ours.

The art for *RIGHT STATE* comes from a crazy little Italian redhead who can create an image the way a Titan could create a sword: Andrea Mutti. He made this story come alive, with a realistic intensity that makes me look like a better storyteller than I am.

As a writer, I'm always looking for ways to explore the themes of the day in stories that are interesting and engaging and can run with the ideas of the moment. With *RIGHT STATE*, we take the genre into the modern era, something that speaks to the intense societal anxieties of our age. Creating *RIGHT STATE* was a joy and a thrill, and I hope the experience is the same for its readers.

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